

Helsinki Commission, Members of the House and Senate, the Department of State, the OSCE, the Council of Europe and other international institutions repeatedly have raised this case and urged President Kuchma and the Ukrainian Government to undertake a speedy, serious, open and transparent investigation into the Gongadze murder case.

Back in December of 2000, I urged Ukrainian authorities to resolve this grave matter in a timely and just manner before the case further tarnished their credibility in dealing with fundamental human rights. Last July, a number of us were present at the Paris OSCE Parliamentary Assembly meeting, where Gongadze's widow Myroslava accepted the OSCE PA Prize for Journalism and Democracy on his behalf. A resolution adopted by the OSCE PA in Paris expressed dismay "that the criminal investigation into the murder of journalist Heorhiy Gongadze has been obstructed by authorities and has not been carried out in accordance with the rule of law."

Last month, Ukrainian authorities blocked FBI experts from examining evidence gathered during the initial investigation. The Bureau had been invited by Ukrainian authorities to advise and assist in the investigation of the case and earlier had participated in identifying Gongadze's remains. Over the last year, Ukrainian prosecutors routinely cited their request for assistance from the FBI as evidence that they were working diligently to solve the murder.

According to a statement released by the U.S. Embassy in Kyiv, the four FBI experts were told that Ukrainian law prohibits prosecutors from releasing any information to them. They were "unable to discuss any aspects of the case, share evidence or conduct a joint site inspection. Because of this, the FBI team could not provide suggestions that might help Ukrainian law enforcement authorities advance the investigation of the murder of Mr. Gongadze." This lack of cooperation after promises to accept the U. S. technical assistance—is an indication of bad faith on the part of the Ukrainian authorities.

This is only the latest example which seriously questions the Ukrainian authorities' commitment to resolving this case and has led many to conclude that the Procurator General's office is hampering the investigation into Gongadze's death. Particularly telling was the Procurator's initially casting doubt on the results of a DNA test reported in February 2001, which determined with a 99.6 percent probability that the body exhumed from a shallow grave in Tarashcha was, indeed, that of Gongadze. The Procurator General, Mykhaylo Potebenko, who recently announced he would resign to become a Member of Parliament from the Communist Party, has also been uncooperative with Gongadze's widow and mother, even after the court gave them status that legally permitted them access to details of the investigation. An assessment of the case last year by Freimut Duve, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of Media, found that the investigation into Gongadze's disappearance has been "extremely unprofessional." It is high time for the Ukrainian authorities to mount a serious, transparent investigation into this case as well as the cases of other murdered journalists.

Since 1998, 11 journalists have been killed in Ukraine and 48 severely injured in unexplained attacks, according to Reporters With-

out Borders. Over the last year, several international bodies have called on Ukrainian authorities to launch a fresh investigation into the disappearance and death of Mr. Gongadze and other journalists and to allow for an independent investigation or to set up a new independent commission of inquiry comprised of international investigators. I also hope that the newly elected Ukrainian parliament will take aggressive action in encouraging governmental accountability for solving the murder and bringing the perpetrators to justice.

Mr. Speaker, on March 31, Ukraine held parliamentary elections. Despite governmental interference in the campaign and abuse of state resources, the Ukrainian electorate showed a strong independent streak with a strong pro-democratic, pro-European orientation. A substantial portion of the Ukrainian people clearly want change—they want to live in a country where democracy and human rights are honored and where the rule of law prevails.

The United States remains committed to encouraging these yearnings. The U. S. Government is the largest bilateral donor in Ukraine, and American companies still are the largest investors in Ukraine. We are deeply engaged with Ukraine in military and security issues, educational exchanges, small business, agriculture, energy, and the development of civil society. American engagement with Ukraine is a testament to the importance that we attach to U.S.—Ukraine relations. However, the level of U.S. engagement is increasingly being questioned, in part because of the obstructionist actions of the authorities concerning the Gongadze case, the curtailing of media freedoms, the persistent debilitating problem of corruption and, most recently, troubling allegations that President Kuchma may have authorized the clandestine sale of the Kolchuga radar system to Iraq in violation of L.J.N. sanctions.

Mr. Speaker, as Co-Chairman of the Helsinki Commission, I once again urge in the strongest possible terms Ukrainian authorities to take seriously the concerns regarding the circumstances that led to the Gongadze murder and the subsequent investigation. His widow, young children, and mother deserve better. The Ukrainian people deserve better.

TRIBUTE TO HARRY STEPANIAN,
WALTER McNAMARA, LARRY
JAKUBOWICZ, AND MARTY GAN-
NON, FIREFIGHTERS FROM CLIN-
TON, MASSACHUSETTS

HON. JAMES P. McGOVERN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 2, 2002

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Harry Stepanian, Walter McNamara, Larry Jakubowicz, and Marty Gannon, firefighters from the town of Clinton, Massachusetts who have announced their retirement after many years of dedicated service.

These men put their lives on the line every day to protect the citizens of Clinton. Because of their efforts through the years, many lives and a great deal of property have been saved, whether it was from entering a burning building or performing as an Emergency Medical Technician.

The town of Clinton is very fortunate to have an outstanding fire department. As we all know—and as the tragedies of September 11th reminded us—the job of a firefighter is not an easy one. It takes a special person to perform the duties required of firefighters. That duty involves risking their lives every day. Through the years, these men and their colleagues have performed admirably. Their community is grateful for their work, and so am I.

It is a pleasure to recognize these outstanding men, and I know the entire House joins me in extending our best wishes to them and to their families for a happy and healthy retirement.

ON THE RETIREMENT OF LEVORIS
ROY, A GREAT EDUCATOR

HON. NICK LAMPSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 2, 2002

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize the outstanding career of Mr. Levoris Roy, who is retiring this year after 35 years of distinguished service as a teacher and principal. Stretching over 4 decades, Mr. Roy's entire career has provided insight, courage and direction to the young citizens of South East Texas.

Mr. Roy is currently serving as Principal of Vincent Middle School, Beaumont Texas. His leadership and ability to achieve has greatly benefitted his school, teachers, students and all of the Beaumont community.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Levoris Roy's career is ripe with countless examples of selfless hard work and extraordinary accomplishment in service to our great Nation. His contributions to Southeast Texas are immeasurable. I ask my colleagues to join me in wishing Levoris Roy and his family a pleasurable and well-deserved retirement.

Congratulations, Mr. Roy, on a job well done.

TRIBUTE TO WILKERSON CHAPEL
AND ITS ANNIVERSARY OF 140
YEARS OF SERVICE TO COLLINS-
VILLE, ILLINOIS

HON. JOHN SHIMKUS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 2, 2002

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the Wilkerson Chapel and the anniversary of its 140 years of service to the community Collinsville, Illinois.

The people of the Wilkerson Chapel are truly good Samaritans. They have spent 140 years preaching the word of Christ to Collinsville and surrounding areas and participating in other good works.

To such people as John A. Gregg and his congregation, the good deeds themselves are their own best rewards. Yet, on this special day, I think it is appropriate that they are recognized for their efforts. They are good Christians and good Americans, and remind us all of the compassion and energy that makes this country great.

To the people of the Wilkerson Chapel, thank you for all your good works over almost